THE

# DRAMATIC CENSOR;

OR,

# Weekly Theatrical Report.

## NUMBER XVII.

SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 1800.

*Intererit multum Davusne loquatur, an Heros;*
*Maturusne senex, an adhuc florente juventa*
*Fervidus; an matrona potens, an sedula nutrix;*
*Mercatorne vagus; culiorne virentis agelli;*
*Colchus, an Assyrius; Thebis nutritus, an Argis.*

The First Volume of the DRAMATIC CENSOR being now completed, the work may be had, either in separate Numbers, or in Sets, half bound, price Seven Shillings, by applying to the Publishers, J, ROACH, Russel-court, Drury-lane; or C. CHAPPLE, 66, Pall Mall.

DRURY-LANE, FRIDAY, *April* 18, 1800.

TRIP TO SCARBOROUGH—*Sheridan.* LODOISKA—*J. P. Kemble.*

AN aukward circumstance occurred, in consequence of the change which took place in the Entertainments of this evening. The bills of the preceding day had announced the representation of CIBBER's sprightly Comedy, entitled, *She Would and She Would Not*; which was, afterwards, on account of the indisposition of Mr. C. KEMBLE, obliged to be deferred. The late hour at

which the change was intimated at the office of some of the most fashionable Morning Papers, precluded an opportunity of apprizing the public of the intended alteration. Accordingly, *Lord Foppington*, or rather his representative, Mr. PALMER, (who resides in the suburbs of the metropolis) unconscious of this circumstance, was not forthcoming at the drawing up of the curtain. It was nearly seven o'clock in the evening, when, by mere accident, he was informed of what had passed. Mr. PALMER instantly hurried off to the Theatre, and arrived just in time to relieve Mr. TRUEMAN, who was preparing to read the part. A proper apology was made to the audience, who, with their wonted candour, pardoned a delay which originated in inadvertency, not wilful negligence or design.

The Play was performed to general satisfaction, and received strong interest from the superior talents of Mrs. JORDAN, which were very successfully exerted in the part of *Miss Hoyden*. Characters of this description are her proper walk, and in these she stands avowedly unrivalled. Miss MELLON is likewise entitled to favourable notice.

In the Entertainment, Mr. TRUEMAN sustained the part of *Count Floreski*. We have already drawn the line of comparison, as far as it is admissible, between this gentleman, and the original representative of the character, Mr. KELLY. We shall only add, that a greater degree of confidence, would considerably enhance the effect of Mr. TRUEMAN'

performance.

performance. He laboured under visible embarrassment, and gave his songs in too low a key.

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## COVENT-GARDEN, FRIDAY, *April* 18, 1800.

### SPEED THE PLOUGH—*Morton.* ST. DAVID's DAY—*Dibdin.*

IN our last Number we pledged ourselves to enter into a critical disquistion of the intrinsic merit of Mr. MORTON's Play, considered in a literary light, and abstracted from the adventitious recommendation of stage effect. This promise we now proceed to discharge.

We have repeatedly had occasion to remark, that the most essential requisite in dramatic composition is the just delineation and preservation of character. A Drama ought to exhibit a faithful transcript of nature. Human passions, and their experimental course of working, constitute the springs of operation, which ought to inspire, control, and regulate every action. No discordant events are admissible, no effects which militate against their assigned causes. The ruling principle of action ought to pervade and influence every branch of conduct, even in its most remote and subordinate operations. This it is which forms the real test and touchstone of dramatic merit. This it is which evinces true capability and genius. That modern species of *caricature*, which succeeds so well upon the stage, in consequence of the depraved taste of the town, is

easily attainable. It requires no native resourses of mind—it requires only industry—it requires only a good *common-place book*, well stocked and regularly kept—it requires only experience and address in the art of patching and botching, with a mechanical knowledge of stage effect.

To show that we are not rash and unjust in classing Mr. MORTON's productions under the latter description, we shall analyze, *seriatim*, the different characters in *Speed the Plough*, and doubt not, but we shall easily prove, to the satisfaction of our readers, that not a single one of his leading *Dramatis Personæ* is consonant with nature.

To begin with *Sir Philip*. That a man may be worked up by treachery and disappointed love, to such a paroxysm of rage and phrenzy as to murder his dearest friend and relative, we readily admit. But that, after committing such an act of atrocity; after the heat of passion has subsided, and cool deliberate reason re-assumes her empire, that *then*, instead of availing himself of the common precautions of guilt, he should purposely treasure up the evidences of his crime; that he should purposely render the means of detection more easy and more lasting, by carrying the instruments of murder from the scene of action to his own house—this to us, appears a mode of conduct diametrically opposite to the ordinary course of things. And to render not only the absurdity of such a supposition still more flagrant, but to add to the brutality of the procedure,

dure, " the fatal instrument, with other guilty proofs," are deposited in the very chamber to which the wretched woman, whose perfidy instigated the murder, is conveyed for her *accouchement*. If this be not *monstrous*, we must acknowledge ourselves at a loss to determine, in what case that epithet may be justly applied.

Again, this wretched woman, it appears, is in due course of time, delivered of a son, and " pays the forfeit of her perjury by death." We presume, *Sir Philip*, much as he may have detested his false mistress, was not so barbarous as to suffer her to perish for want of proper assistance. Here then, we are to suppose an inquisitive and busy nurse, with other female attendants requisite on such occasions, (and curiosity, we know, is not totally foreign to the female character) introduced into, and rummaging a room, which contains sufficient evidences of guilt to lead the perpetrator to the gallows! Nay more—the woman dies—of course the undertaker gets a job; and coffin-makers, searchers, &c. obtain access to this fatal chamber! Yet the Baronet feels no dread of detection, but suffers the evidences of his guilt to stare them in the face. After the interment, the chamber, it is but natural to conclude, is cleaned, aired, &c. operations which afford much opportunity of detection. Yet still the Baronet does not give himself the trouble, though his neck is at stake, to bear off these guilty proofs, (which we

we are expressly told are *many**) but leaves them to take their chance.

He then goes abroad, and deems an injunction to his gardener, whom he commissions to remove the knife and clout, sufficient precaution against discovery, sufficient security for his life, his character and fortune. His hatred of the woman that jilted him, devolves by inheritance upon the offspring of her guilty love. What are the most probable means his ingenuity can devise to escape the danger of *beholding* this illegitimate child?—of "being blasted with his presence?"—He has the boy brought up at the identical place, where he himself has been wont to reside; he does not appear to give himself any concern about the consequences; he appears not to consider that the mystery attached to *Henry's* parentage and connexions may provoke curiosity, and eventually lead to surmizes and enquiries, that in the issue may effect a complete exposure of his guilt. After a long absence from his native country, he returns to England; puts his life, his reputation, and his fortune afresh in jeopardy, without previously taking a single step to assure himself that any measures had been adopted for his safety. It does not even appear, that he took the precaution of writing to his confi-

* "I forced the doors—a fire-brand was my guide—and among *many* evidences of blood and guilt, I found these."—See *Speed the Plough*, page 89.

dential

dential agent, to ascertain whether his injunctions relative to the knife and the clout, &c. had been complied with; but boldly ventures into England, braves the gallows, and fearless of the discoveries which may have taken place; fearless of the local changes, alterations, improvements, repairs, &c. which the castle may have undergone during a lapse of twenty years, returns to his domain, and rests satisfied with asking *Evergreen*, who might have *died* in the course of his absence, (of consequence the possession of the keys of the fatal chamber would have devolved upon a person not in the secret, and therefore more liable to form hasty suspicions, and follow up detection) whether he had obeyed his orders? He receives an answer in the negative; and now somewhat alarmed for his safety, he resolves to do—what he ought to have done himself, and not entrusted to a proxy, twenty years ago. Yet still he finds it more prudent to divulge the fatal secret to a third person—more prudent to increase the danger of detection, by multiplying the number of his confidents, than to execute the commission himself. He puts his life in the hands of a hair-brained new acquaintance, whose discretion he has the greatest reason to doubt; and after making a circumstantial confession of his guilt, directs him to the place where he may find the damning proofs, and arm the vengeance of the law against him! Such is the *consistency* of Mr. MORTON's characters! Can this be called a transcript from nature? Can this be called

faithful representation of human life? Is it after this manner we see the actions of mankind regulated and controled? We flatter ourselves our readers cannot entertain a divided opinion on this head.

Let us now proceed to *Morrington*, alias *Charles Blandford*. The same allowances which we made for the uncontrolable effects of passion in the case of *Sir Philip*, apply with equal force to the conduct of *Morrington*, and render his treachery to his brother, by seducing the girl of his affections, strictly compatible with * moral and dramatic justice. But his subsequent line of conduct is liable to very serious objection. He is represented as a repentant sinner—as an offender who was on the eve of accomplishing, by suicide, the punishment *partially* inflicted by his injured brother—" when some angel whispered—' Live and atone!' " How does he set about this necessary duty? He sees his injured brother writhing under the agony of a guilty mind; tortured by the stings of conscience, which incessantly upbraids him with murder, with fratricide!—he sees that injured brother's peace destroyed for ever—sees him fly to a course of ruinous dissipation, to stifle the cruel pange of remorse. For twenty long tedious years he suffers his brother to endure this

* We trust it is scarcely necessary to apprize our readers, that the word *moral*, as employed in the present instance, has no reference to the *morality* of the action, in an *ethical* point of view, but is used in its true etymological sense, as analogous with the experienced course of human actions.

complicated

complicated misery—follows him from place to place—watches all his steps with the minutest vigilance—beholds his health impaired, his constitution sapped and undermined by the corroding canker of care—all this he views, and yet omits to take the step which alone could restore peace and comfort to his injured brother's soul—omits to reveal himself, and lighten his brother's conscience of the load of guilt which weighs him down—" Is **this* atonement?—No!" Is subsequent rescue from that ruin, which he himself has entailed upon his brother, and which he might have prevented *in the first instance*, by discovering himself to be alive—is *this* atonement? No! Is all that, under these circumstances, he does, or possibly could have done, competent atonement? No! How much completer would have been his atonement, if he had taken the *earliest* opportunity of apprising his brother that he still lived?—if he had appeased the stings of his brother's conscience, and by such a procedure guarded against, and fore-closed that ruinous career of dissipation, to prevent the effects of which he himself is compelled to pursue base and dishonourable courses—" to litter with villians! and practice the arts of devils!"—His brother's fortune would then not have been lost at the gaming table—his brother's existence would not have been rendered a curse to him for twenty years—health, and peace of mind,

* See *Speed the Plough*, page 91.

would have been his brother's portion, and *Sir Philip* would have possessed, in comfort, those "large estates," which *Morrington* restores to him, at a period when his *debilitated frame deprives him almost of the faculty of enjoyment! This would, indeed, have been atonement!

The *whimsical Baronet* next comes under our notice. Such a compound of heterogenous qualities —qualities incompatible with each other—never yet existed in actual life. Experience, indeed, shows us, that it is not impossible for a man, who is *very wise*, in the general tenor of his conduct, to be *very foolish*, with respect to certain peculiarities. But a man, whose whole soul is occupied upon trifles, whose attention is directed to chimerical, trifling, and silly pursuits, is incompetent to any solid, grand, and useful enterprize. There never yet existed a *Sir Abel* who engaged in the manufacture of "Archimedan corkscrews — who obtained patents for tweezers, tooth-picks, and tinder-boxes," and who speculated on the means of "converting saw-dust into deal boards," and "of cleaning rooms by a steam-engine"—there never existed a man of this description, who possessed

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* "The canker here (*Sir Philip exclaims, striking his breast*) has withered up my trunk!"—and that his bodily frame must have sustained a powerful shock—that sorrow, more than age, had destroyed his health, is evident, from the preceding speech of *Evergreen*—"Can twenty years have wrought the change I see?"—*Speed the Plough*, page 44.

sufficient

sufficient strength of mind, sufficient stability, and practical good sense, to entertain the conception, that "a healthy* young man, between the handles of a plough, is one of the noblest illustrations of the prosperity of his country!" Pursuits, so diametrically opposite, so inevitably subversive of each other, never yet associated together.

As little is it conformable to the ordinary course of things, that a parent, who has concluded a matrimonial treaty of alliance between his son and the daughter of an illustrious family, should in an instant, with scarcely a single word of remonstrance, break off the match, because his simpleton of a son, forsooth, has fallen in love with a waiting-maid! Such abrupt, and, on the general scale of reasoning, unnatural transitions, class among the characteristic defects of Mr. MORTON's dramas. This gentleman is absolutely a plagiarist to himself, and presents us with a second edition of his own errors, instead of correcting them. *Sir Abel* and his son are, in fact, the mere counterpart of the *Rapids*, in the *Cure for the Heart Ache*. They are characters which never existed but in the author's brain: they are the—

*Ægri somnia vana—*

which betray an undisciplined and incompetent mind. *Susan Ashfield* is equally the mere copy of *Jesse Oatlands*.

*Bob* is a most incongruous animal—a dramatic

* *Speed the Plough*, page 12.

mongrel—a picture with two faces, resembling the ingenious sketches of some of our modern artists, which exhibit *reverse characters*, according to the manner in which you hold them. In the two first Acts he is a compound of levity—an unleavened mass of folly. In the third Act, he remains concealed, and may be supposed to lie in that state of inactive torpor, which certain creatures experience, previous to their organic metamorphosis. In Act IV. he appears transmuted and transformed. He is now become a rational animal; he speaks and acts like a man of sense, and ranks among the children of nature! Before, he was a *non-descript*—a wild imaginary being. But in proportion as *Bob* advances in *character*, in the same proportion does his representative, Mr. FAWCETT, fall off in the *representation*. Broad farce and *caricature* are well adapted to this performer's genius; but in the sentimental walk he is entirely out of his element.

To pursue this train of disquisition through the whole list of the *Dramatis Personæ*, in the New Comedy, would carry us to a greater length than the limits of our publication will admit. We must, therefore, confine ourselves to the most prominent features. The character of *Henry* is, in itself, not ill-sketched; but it loses all its recommendation through its want of propriety and fitness. Educated and trained, in the manner *Henry* appears to have been, with none but illiterate and vulgar associates, it may well excite our wonder, by what miracle he

acquired

acquired that degree of refinement, which his conversation discovers. On this subject we had occasion to offer some remarks, in a former Number of the DRAMATIC CENSOR, when we pointed out the expediency of obviating this objection, by assigning some adequate cause and reason for this striking distinction between *Henry* and his companions. This object, as we then observed, might be attained with very little difficulty—reference might have easily been made to a friendly intercourse between *Henry* and some gentleman of talents and acquirements. As the case at present stands, he does not appear to have any higher or more enlightened connexions than the *Ashfields*, and their manners and conversation form a glaring contrast to *Henry's* character. But a *modern* Comedy may be put together by a compiler of common place; neither taste nor judgment are requisite ingredients in the composition.

*Miss Blandford* is an avowed copy from *Amelia*, in *Lovers Vows*, and liable to the same objections, which apply to that character. KOTZEBUE and MORTON, have both fallen into the same error. They mistake *silliness* for *simplicity—artlessness* and *idiotism*, are with them synonimous terms.

*Ashfield* and his dame, may arrogate to themselves the *negative* praise of being the best drawn characters in the whole groupe; in fact, Mr. MORTON's sketches appear to greater advantage, in proportion as they are thrown into the back ground. But even these are far from meriting the title of correct and

faithful

faithful delineations. The farmer, amidst all his bluntness and rusticity, discovers too much quaintness, too much pertness and presumption. He is too familiar, and even at times unmannerly loquacious with his superiors. Farmers, in the actual experience of human life, are not apt to treat baronets, and gentlemen of fortune, with incivility and rudeness. His dame, with the exception of the scene in the fourth Act, where she requests *Morrington* to cram "a couple of turkies into his pocket"—(*Speed the Plough*, page 63)—conducts herself with greater *decorum*, though her husband sets up his own example as a pattern, and counsels her to "behave *pratty*, as *he* always does."

As to *Lady Handy*, she is no character at all. She is merely a walking figure, which serves as the butt for much illiberal sarcasm, and many *common-place* reflections, on the fairest and most lovely class of the creation. And the part, which (if it deserves to be acted at all) ought to have been assigned to Mrs. MADDOCKS, suffers additional degradation from Mrs. DIBDIN's manner of performance.

*Susan Ashfield*, as we have already remarked, is the second edition of *Jesse Oatlands*, in *The Cure for the Heart Ache*, but under a less interesting and engaging form. She is a very *passive* character in *Speed the Plough*, and stands indebted for her popularity to the merit of MISS MURRAY.

The remainder of the *Dramatis Personæ*, with the exception of *Evergreen*, a blunt honest character for

for which Mr DAVENPORT is well adapted, and a short scene between *Gerald* and *Lady Handy*, serve to swell the list of names in the Play Bill.

It appears then, from the result of this disquisition, which might justly be extended to a much greater length, if the limits of our publication would permit, that a Drama may experience a very successful run of popularity, and fill the treasury of the theatre, as well as the private purse of the author, without possessing any solid title to approbation. It appears that a Drama constructed on false and irrational principles, may strongly interest and delight an audience under the influence of a false taste, and perverted judgment. It appears that, " there is a tide in the affairs of men;" and that the writer who diligently watches the fluctuation of folly and fashion, may steer his way to fortune and success, by driving with the stream, and humouring the public infatuation. Taste, gegius, and ability, are now less requisite, in the composition of a modern play, than vigilance and punctuality in keeping a common-place book, well stocked with the best and newest assortment. As dramatic writing is now become such a lucrative trade, we shall, for the benefit of the *unenlightened*, who may feel themselves deterred from speculating in this branch of manufacture, by their modest distrust of their own abilities, present them with a *Receipt*, efficacious, and infallible, and to which, experience stamps *Probatum est*.

Never

Never read any book, tract, or publication whatsoever, whether a novel or a sermon, a newspaper or *Joe Miller*, without having your memorandum book at hand. Whenever you meet with a striking passage, a new trope, hyperbole, or flowery image, set it down, and sooner neglect to say your prayers at night, than go to bed without duly posting it into your book of *common place*, for uses which will appear hereafter. This rule equally applies to any chance-witticism that may be uttered in company, whether of a public or a private nature; and more peculiarly whenever you may happen to have a *bright thought of your own*. The more seldom this latter case occurs, the more precious and valuable the consequence. It then behoves you to treasure up the costly jewel with double care. Always bear in mind, that bright thoughts of your own are likely to appear—

*Rari nantes in gurgite vasto*—

and, therefore, in whatever occupation you may be engaged, even on the most retired and unpromising occasions, always take care to be provided with paper. In reading a newspaper, always have an eye to the fashionable follies of the day: these yield a certain and productive harvest. If you meet with a few *forced* puns, be sure to minute them; no matter on what subject they hinge, whether on *forced* fruit, or *forced* love—on *green peas*, or *Fetter Lane sausages!*—you can always lug in a *Lady Rowley Poley*, or a half-witted sentimental cockney. If a novel

vel courts your perusal, never pass turpid and exaggerated images—no matter if they be a little stale and hacknied. Consider, what a store of glowing hyperboles and metaphors this class of literature is known to contain. You enlist into your service the boundless universe! the four elements! the whole animal and vegetable creation! Where, for instance, can you meet with sublimer descriptions of love, or of hate; of friendship, or of anger? Nerves braced to the tone of ecstacy!—barks of trees, wounded with the deep incision of *Miranda's* name!—Suns, setting and rising, alternately!—the morning beam to light you to happiness; the setting beam to calm and tranquilize the mind! There you meet with the *young* tiger, when *first* his savage nature rouses him to vengeance!—(N. B. This is a *picture* of peculiar beauty, on account of the elegant *innovation* in the thought. The *old* tiger, robbed of her *young* would, perhaps, have suggested a truer and more natural image of *vengeance*; but then the former hyperbole boasts the merit of more *modern* invention)—You meet with fatal chambers! blood-stained daggers! ensanguined clouts! massy bars! cankerous rust! alarm-bells! suffocating *damps*, and suffocating *flames* too! fire-brands! conflagrations! murders! paricides! matricides! and fratricides! in abundance. You meet likewise with melting damsels, that court strange gentlemen! low-bred rustics that beard men of rank, because they wont give them their daughters! In short, between the

newspapers, and *Minerva's Novel Office!* you meet with every thing necessary towards the *manufacture* of modern Comedy or Tragedy. And you may have, further, the additional advantage of being able to rank your Play in which ever of these two classes of the drama you think proper. Or you may refer them to both, and have your Play acted alternately, as a *Comedy* one night, and as a *Tragedy* the other, by closing it alternately with a *Dance*, or the exhibition of a *Statuary's Shop!* after the example of our most approved modern masters, and completely *à la Kotzebue!*—

PROBATUM EST.

S——n, R——s, M——n, D——n.

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DRURY-LANE, SATURDAY, *April* 19, 1800.

PIZARRO—*Sheridan.* OF AGE TO-MORROW.

MR. HOLLAND, in consequence of Mr. C. KEMBLE's indisposition, performed the part of *Alonzo*; and Mr. WEWITZER appeared as the centinel in the prison scene, in the room of Mr. HOLLAND.

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COVENT-GARDEN, SATURDAY, *April* 19, 1800.

LOVER's VOWS—*Mrs. Inchbald.* LOCK AND KEY—*Prince Hoare.*

THIS being Mr. POPE's benefit night, his wife repeated COLLINS's *Ode on the Passions*, and proved, by her own example, the impossibility of reciting poetry, especially lyric poetry, with propriety and effect, without possessing a thorough knowledge of the laws of numbers. A Musical Interlude, called *Saturday Night at Sea*, was performed between the Play and the Entertainment. DRURY-

## DRURY-LANE, MONDAY, *April* 21, 1800.

MERCHANT OF VENICE—*Shakespeare.* THE DESERTER *C. Dibdin.*

Our correspondent, Mr. WALSINGHAM, who is so highly incensed against us, because we pay less attention (as the case appears in his eyes) to the Performers of Drury-Lane, than to those of Covent-Garden, will doubtless be doubly irritated this week, when he finds us pass over a Play of such celebrity, and in which Mr. KEMBLE sustains so arduous a part, without any comment. But we must beg leave to apprize Mr. WALSINGHAM, that much as we wish to comply with his importunities, there are other gentlemen, besides himself, who honour us with their correspondence, and have requests to make on their part. We have been so strongly and so repeatedly solicited, to complete our *Strictures* upon Mr. MORTON's Play, as well as to resume our critique of the *German Theatre*, that we have not been able to withhold our assent any longer. But as the limits of our publication will not suffice to enlarge upon every topic at one and the self-same time, we are, of course, reduced to the necessity of *selection*. This, we trust, will be a competent apology, both to Mr. WALSINGHAM, and to the public in general, for the short notice we this week take of the performances at the Theatre. We are unwilling to do things by *halves*, and a future opportunity will doubtless soon offer, for making good the present deficiency.

## COVENT-GARDEN, MONDAY, *April* 21, 1800.

SPEED THE PLOUGH—*Morton.* ST. DAVID's DAY.—*Dibdin.*.

[The remainder of our Weekly Report, is obliged to be deferred till our next, for want of room.]

## THEATRICAL CRITICISM, &c.

*THE STRANGER*, a Drama in Five Acts, as performed at the Theatre Royal, Drury-Lane. Translated from the German of AUGUSTUS VON KOTZEBUE, by BENJ. THOMPSON, Esq.

THE production of this Play, which made its first appearance on the boards of Drury-Lane, March 24, 1798, constitutes a memorable epocha in the annals of Dramatic Literature. It is to the favourable reception of this German Alien, that KOTZEBUE owes his naturalization on the British Stage. Prompted by its extraordinary success, the Managers of Covent-Garden made a similar experiment the following season, and brought forward, under the auspices of Mrs. INCHBALD, the popular Comedy of *Lovers' Vows*. In both instances the experiment answered the most sanguine expectations of the projectors; and KOTZEBUE, by a train of events, as sudden, and as efficacious in their operation, as any of the revolutions, which ever and anon convulse the political world, established his usurpation on that throne, which SHAKESPEARE, and his compatriot race of dramatists once filled with equal honour to themselves and to the national character.

Now

Now it was that laborious dullness, on the part of unqualified but plodding translators, acting in concert with the mercenary rapacity of speculating publishers, paved the way to the establishment of the *German Translating Manufactory*. As this institution has been attended with consequences, which have considerably influenced the literary taste and character of the age, by "piping all hands to work," to *man the capstan* of German importation—

*Scribimus indocti, doctique passim*—

a free, impartial exposition of * facts, in the form of a regular detail of the several circumstances and causes (many of them never before submitted to public cognizance) which led to this event, will, it is presumed, be no unacceptable *addendum* to the Dramatic Annals of Great Britain. We shall, therefore, enter into a brief, but correct statement of the rise and progress of this establishment, as a necessary preliminary to our present Strictures, and trust the reader will agree with us in deeming this preamble strictly within the line of a publication, which professes to take a comprehensive view of the German Drama, as well in reference to its own intrinsic deserts, as more peculiarly with a view to its connection with the literature of this country. In canvassing this topic, we shall extend our re-

* Truth, we know, is not always welcome. The facts we are now preparing to detail may, possibly, be grating to certain individuals; but feeling it his duty to expose imposture, the writer advances these facts with confidence. Personal knowledge is the authority on which he rests his assertions.

searches

searches to a greater length of detail, than we otherwise might feel inclined to do, as the *Critical Review*, in their Strictures on *Pizarro with Notes*, &c. expressly challenged the writer of this work to be minute and explicit in his statement.

A certain *doer* of German into English, who soon became a *veteran*, (*then* in habits of intimacy, very properly suspended *since*, with Mrs. INCHBALD) *happened* to translate the identical Play, which that lady, in *confidence*, informed her she was preparing for the stage. Her version was placed in the hands of a certain publisher, thoroughly acquainted with his business, who so well practised those arts of procrastination, which gained Fabius immortal renown—

*Unus homo nobis* CUNCTANDO *restituit rem*—

that the translator was kept in utter ignorance, relative to the acceptance or rejection of her version, till the very night of representation. Even then a positive answer was withheld.

With a palpitating heart, as rightly conceiving that the success of her manuscript depended entirely on the success of the Play, this *veteran translator, in embryo,* attended the Theatre, accommodated with orders by Mrs. INCHBALD herself; that lady little suspecting an invasion of her profits. The publisher very prudently adopted the same line of conduct, and manfully assisted in clapping the Play, which he had predetermined to *forestall*, provided its reception should warrant the risque of printing. Applause was the *order of the day*, from the drawing-

up

up till the fall of the curtain; and the publisher left the Theatre fully satisfied that his speculation would be productive of much lucre.

On his return home the manuscript was immediately brought under revision. Unfortunately it was now discovered, that the translator neither understood *German*, nor was capable of writing *English*—two qualifications, which the bookseller justly thought it of some, if not of essential consequence, that a translator should be possessed of. At the same time, the business required *dispatch*, as well as *nicety*; all depending in the publisher's estimation, who is practically versed in the *Wisdom of Nations*, on *striking while the iron is hot*. The necessary operations commenced that very night; and the *Natural Son*, by a *hasty* delivery, (characteristic of a *spurious* offspring, for whom due and timely provision has not been made) saw the light in the course of a few hours. Grammatical blunders, distorted diction, crabbed sentences, and gross perversions of the author's meaning, were rectified as well as the hurry of the business would permit. The work was sent, page by page, to the press, and the whole procedure conducted with a degree of regularity and expedition, which would have done honour to the first *manufactory* in the kingdom. Wafers and scissars, of course, came in for a large share of the credit. But when, as happened more than once, this *patch-work* resource was found inadequate to the emergency of existing circumstances, the page was cancelled *in toto*, and the leaves, both of the

*manuscript*

*manuscript* and the *original*, torn out to be re-translated. This was particularly the case in the Fourth Scene of the Third Act, where *Anhalt* draws a contrasted picture of matrimony. This Scene, at the especial request of the publisher, who considered the passage in question, as *cabinet pictures*, (we quote his express words) was entirely *re-written*; and, perhaps, we do not speak too boldly, if we add, that not *one* single line of the *veteran* translator was retained. To give the greater weight and consequence to the publication, independant of a critical preface, pointing out the principal variations between the *original* and Mrs. INCHBALD'S *adapted* Play, for which the present Reviewer of the GERMAN THEATRE stands responsible, the *learned* Dr. WILLICH was commissioned to *vamp-up* a Memoir of the author, (the chief materials of which were furnished by the * writer of this Essay, but *parodied* from a fluent easy English style, into the Doctor's *untwisted* † prose) from a former Number of the *Monthly Magazine*.

(To be continued.)

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* Should any of the parties alluded to in this transaction have the hardihood to contradict a single assertion advanced by the writer of this *Review*, authentic documents in their own *hand-writing* shall immediately be submitted to the public eye. The Editor of the DRAMATIC CENSOR stands upon a firm immoveable basis, the *Rock of Truth*. He further begs leave to inform a *certain* gentleman, that he still retains in his possession the *originals*, on which others have found it their interest to *work*. If his statements are erroneous, he stands under correction, and obnoxious to *easy* exposure. Gentlemen are welcome to try the experiment; only let them bear in mind their own comfort and conveniency, as far as the same may be infringed upon by the practical illustration of the writer's motto—"*Nemo me impune lacessit.*"

† For an explanation of this phrase, consult Page 400 of No. XXXII. of the *Monthly Magazine*.

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